

On the other hand, the slots 32 in Fishley extend parallel into the surface of the ring 24 (e.g., see Figs. 2A and 2B). Each slot 32 is defined as an attachment member (column 4, lines 37-38) and is used for attachment of a hook (Figs. 6A-6C, and column 6, line 62 – column 7, line 6).

Based on the foregoing, claims 1 and 8 should not be rejected as being unpatentable over Applicant's APA in view of Fishley et al. Thus, claims 1 and 8 are patentable for the reasons set forth above. Claims 4-7 and 16 are dependent on claim 1, and claims 10, 11, and 19-21 are dependent on claim 8, and are at least patentable over the art of record for the reasons set forth above. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 4-8, 10-16, and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claims 12-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art in view of Fishley et al. and McHugh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,033,236). It is respectfully submitted that claims 12-15 are allowable over the art of record for the reasons set forth below.

The present invention as claimed in claim 12 is directed to a method of reducing the rigidity in an electrical connector housing by determining a location on the housing where stress may build up, and then removing a portion of the housing at that location. The portion of the housing that is removed extends substantially perpendicular to a surface of the housing.

As noted above, Fishley lacks these features. Moreover, McHugh merely describes slots 38 that are parallel to a surface of the housing 12.

Based on the foregoing, claim 12 should not be rejected as being unpatentable over Applicant's APA in view of Fishley et al. and McHugh et al. Thus, claim 12 is patentable for the reasons set forth above. Claims 13-15 are dependent on claim 12, and are at least patentable over the art of record for the reasons set forth above. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

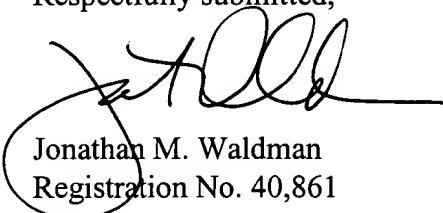
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to this effect is respectfully requested.

DOCKET NO.: BERG-2462/C2346

PATENT

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned “Version with markings to show changes made.”

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: **August 13, 2001**

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 8, and 12 as follows.

1. (As Amended) An electrical connector, comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a plurality of surface mount contacts; and
 - areas of reduced rigidity in a peripheral wall of the housing, each of the areas of reduced rigidity comprising either a notch or a slot extending substantially perpendicular to a surface of the housing, and located at positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector and extending through a distal end of the peripheral wall of the housing from an inner face to an outer face of the peripheral wall.

8. (As Amended) A housing for an electrical connector, comprising:
 - a frame; and
 - areas of reduced rigidity in the frame extending substantially perpendicular to a surface of the housing located only at positions generally furthest from a neutral point of the connector.

12. (As Amended) A method of reducing rigidity in a housing of an electrical connector, comprising:
 - determining a location on said housing which may build up stress; and
 - removing a portion of the housing extending substantially perpendicular to a surface of the housing at said location.